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ABSTRACT

This historical study looks at the social role of the American college for the period between the Civil War and World War I. The book argues that colleges of the period were at the intersection of powerful social forces and emerged as one of the winners in the resulting changes. Colleges began the period as agents of ethno-religious subcultures and local boosterism. The rapid growth of industrial wealth and the white-collar professional and business class, however, produced students and donors with different world views. The resulting conflicts challenged the traditions of many colleges while fueling their ambitions. By World War I most materially successful colleges catered to the urban Protestant upper and upper-middle classes, drawing on these groups' new wealth to build their institutions. The book examines four representative private colleges attended by the dominant social groups of late 19th century America: Bucknell University, Franklin and Marshall College, Princeton University, and Swarthmore College. The study of these four colleges illuminates an important educational institution but also sheds light on cultural identity and class formation in late 19th and early 20th century America. Includes an index and bibliography of over 400 items. (JB)

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